

6/24/2008

King County Council,

RE: Letter of support for Open Space and Unincorporated Areas changes to the King County Charter

My name is Pat Traub, I am the president of EFFRA (Enumclaw Foothills Forested Recreation Association), and live in rural King County outside Enumclaw, WA. I am writing concerning the change to the King County charter regarding open space.

I woke up this weekend to a 270 degree view from my bedroom, which goes on and on for miles. From my bedroom windows I see Mt Peak, pastures, trees, and the Enumclaw Foothills. I also only see 3 houses. These are not close, acres divide us.

Why tell you this? So, you can know I appreciate the open space I currently experience. This may change in the future if King County administration decides it is more important to build houses than keep the area rural. I live in an area where many of the farms have been protected with the Farm Preservation Act. Unfortunately, our open spaces are not as protected.

You may hear from people that the protection is not required. But experience should definitely show us that as our administration policy changes so do our ideas of what is important and what isn't.

Currently we have a farm in Enumclaw which some people are trying to remove from the Farm Preservation list. But the forethought of our administration when enacting this legislation, made it difficult (not impossible) to remove it from the list. I am looking for the same with the open space change to the charter. It doesn't have to be written in stone the area must stay open space, but very, very difficult to change.

Let's keep those areas many people worked to get designated open space, as open space. Don't throw away the time and effort people put into these projects. If we believed enough at the time to designate them as open space, let's do our best to keep them open space.

Once it's gone, it can't be returned to the same condition.

A quick note on the Unincorporated Areas high-level position: We believe this is a great idea and appreciate everything you do for us, but this position should be filled by a rural resident familiar with life and issues in the unincorporated areas.

Sincerely,

Patricia A Traub
President, EFFRA